

Plan BayArea

Building on a Legacy of Leadership



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

The State Legislature has long urged more coordination and cooperation among the Bay Area's regional agencies. Action on SB 874 (Torlakson) in 2002 led to the 2004 establishment of the Joint Policy Committee, which now includes representatives from the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and MTC. But the biggest watershed bill leading to greater collaboration is undoubtedly SB 375 (Steinberg), enacted in 2008.

Plan Bay Area, developed jointly by MTC and ABAG, is the region's first Sustainable Communities Strategy and has been the subject of an intense interagency planning, analysis and outreach effort. While SB 375 required Plan Bay Area to reduce each Bay Area resident's transportation-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emis-



Proposed renovation of 390 Main, atrium interior (Perkins+Will)

sions by 15 percent by 2035, we also evaluated the plan against other key concerns, including the economy, the transportation system, public health, and social equity.

While Plan Bay Area doesn't achieve all of the bold targets we set for ourselves, it illuminates where we fall short and sheds light on how to make further progress on our goals.

Plan Bay Area symbolizes a more collaborative era of Bay Area governance that is also taking shape, quite literally, in the renovations underway for the new regional agency headquarters at 390 Main Street in San Francisco. The headquarters will include MTC, ABAG, the Air District, as well as the back-end offices for FasTrak® and Clipper®. The agencies anticipate relocating to the new building in 2014.

New Bay Bridge East Span Opening This Fall

The opening of the new Bay Bridge is just months away — Labor Day weekend 2013.

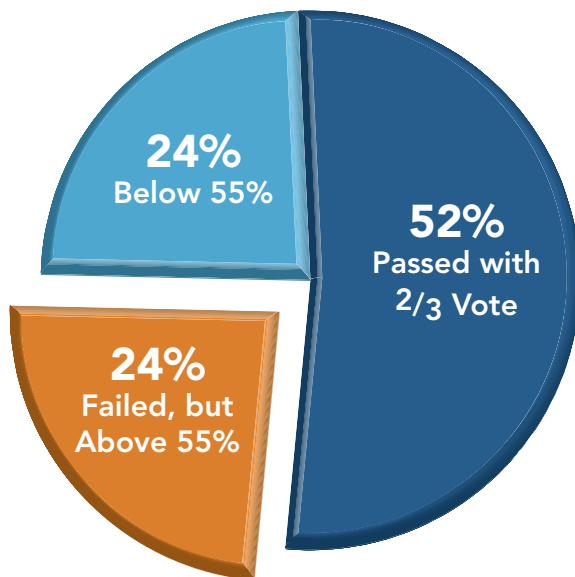
A civic celebration to mark the advent of a new architectural and engineering icon is being planned. The Commission is deliberating this month about whether to contribute toll funds for public access and safety services. Private funds also are being raised for a full program of events including shore-to-shore fireworks, an air and sea show, a walk, a half-marathon run, and a bicycle ride across the entire bridge.



Restore Democracy: Lower the 2/3 Vote Threshold

MTC's top legislative priority this year is lowering the vote threshold for local and regional transportation tax measures from two-thirds to 55 percent, as proposed by SCA 4 (Liu) and SCA 8 (Corbett). With local funding now constituting two thirds of the state's total transportation funding, lowering the voter approval threshold is a major step toward preserving and expanding our existing roadway and public transportation infrastructure.

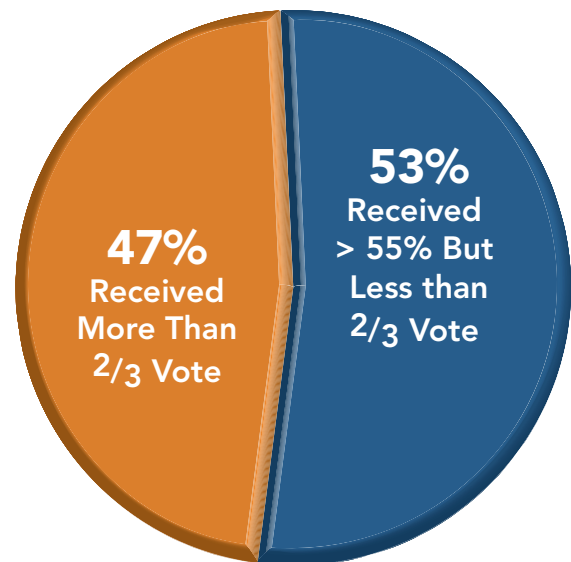
Missed Opportunities: Transportation Measures since 2002



Source: MoveLA

As shown at right, the impact of lowering the vote threshold requirement for school bonds has been striking — more than half of those passed in 2012 would have failed under the 2/3 requirement. Had the 55 percent threshold been applicable to transportation since 2002, an additional 10 local transportation measures would have passed.

Majority of Successful November 2012 School Bond Measures Fell Short of 2/3



Source: MoveLA

While eight of the Bay Area's counties have managed to pass transportation sales taxes under current law, success has repeatedly eluded Solano County, home to one of the region's worst bottlenecks, and certainly dampens the prospects for new transportation taxes in any Bay Area county. In the case of Solano County, 60 percent of voters supported the sales tax proposal in 2002 and 64 percent in 2004. Most recently, the 2012 election dealt a serious blow to Alameda County's effort to extend and increase their transportation sales tax measure, with 66.53 percent of voters supporting the measure, falling short of passage by a mere 0.14 percent.

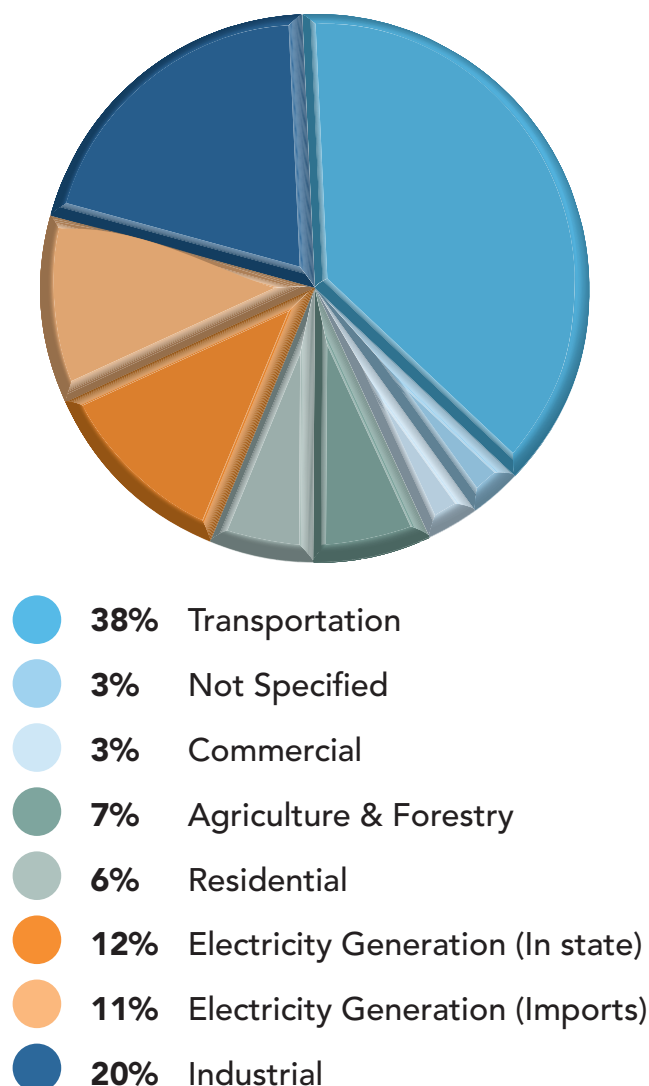
Ensure Transportation Benefits from State's Cap & Trade Program

One of MTC's top priorities in 2013 is ensuring that proceeds from California's nascent "cap-and-trade" program are reinvested in our transportation system through a program that integrates transportation improvements with land use strategies. MTC is a member of the Transportation Coalition for Livable Communities, comprised of the California Alliance for Jobs, California League of Cities, the State Association of Counties, and the California Transit Association. The coalition is working to ensure that the three-year expenditure plan proposed by the Department of Finance — and any budget trailer bill legislation adopted this year — provides adequate funding for transportation and a program structure that builds on SB 375.



MTC is a member of this growing coalition of transportation stakeholders seeking to ensure auction proceeds from transportation fuels are dedicated to transportation

2009 GHG Emissions by Sector



Transportation fuels will be brought into the program in 2015, when the number of

allowances available for auction more than doubles — from 160 million in 2013 to 378 million in 2015. At a floor price of \$10 per metric ton, this translates into a minimum of \$3.8 billion in additional state funds.

Investing a significant share of this new revenue in transportation is not just good public policy, it also will help preserve public support for the cap-and-trade program among California motorists who will likely experience some level of price increase at the pump. The California electorate has made it abundantly clear in three statewide initiatives in the last decade that they expect all taxes they pay at the pump to be spent on transportation. Ignoring this message could result in a significant backlash that could hamper the success of the entire program.

MTC supports a flexible approach to project eligibility and program design within the AB 32 regulatory framework requiring that funds be used for projects that will reduce GHGs. Since meeting the challenge of SB 375 will require a significant increase in funding for California's metro regions, we believe the majority of funds invested in transportation should be distributed directly to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for competitive grant programs based on state-defined project eligibility and consistent criteria for measuring GHGs.

It's Time for Reform: Fix CEQA

MTC strongly supports the original goals of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). At the same time, we urge the Legislature to consider modest changes to curb its abuse by project opponents and speed up the environmental review process. Far too often, CEQA is used to block good projects, which has the ironic result of sometimes paving the way for alternate projects — in someone else's backyard — that may be much worse from an environmental standpoint.

Over the four decades since it was enacted, CEQA has provided the forum for project opponents, as well as interested neighbors, to participate in the project development process. That is a good thing. As you grapple with CEQA reform, we urge you to bring the decision about what gets built in California out of the courts and back to

the public boardrooms of the agencies responsible for approving the projects. That's where decisions in a democracy belong. As the MPO for the San Francisco Bay Area, a region renowned for its engaged citizenry, we are well aware of the extent to which residents want a say in the shape of their communities. They should have one, but it shouldn't be so easy to use a state law to delay good projects long after the public has weighed in.

As the Legislature grapples with this issue in 2013, we urge you to seize this opportunity for reform and focus on the following key goals:

1. Provide expedited review for projects that are consistent with an adopted Sustainable Communities Strategy with a certified environmental impact report (EIR).
2. Improve certainty in the legal process by curtailing the ability of litigants to use CEQA to challenge statutorily adopted environmental standards.
3. Allow a project's long-term environmental benefits to be integrated into the CEQA review process up front.
4. Narrow the scope of CEQA so that it does not apply to a transit operator considering service changes or changes to local parking requirements.

What Types of Projects Are Most Often Tied Up in CEQA Litigation?



59% of challenged projects identified as either infill or greenfield were infill projects



36% of projects challenged were public works projects



38% of the most commonly-challenged types of projects involve public infrastructure (19%) and mixed-use developments (19%)

Source: Holland & Knight LLP, *Analysis of Recent Challenges to Environmental Impact Reports*, December 2012



METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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